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Amherst Community Services
Phone (413) 256-4074
Fax (413) 256-4061
E-mail community@amherstma.gov

TOWN OF AMHERST
2010 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING
SOCIAL SERVICE APPLICATION

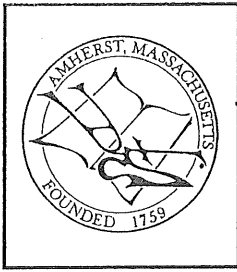
PLEASE SUBMIT FIVE COPIES OF YOUR PROPOSAL

BY:

OCTOBER 29, 2010 AT 4:30 P.M.

TO:

Amherst Planning Department
Amherst Town Hall, 2nd floor
4 Boltwood Avenue
AMHERST, MA 01002



THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
170 CHESTNUT STREET
AMHERST, MA 01002

413-362-1810 (PHONE)
413-549-6108 (FAX)

October 28, 2010

Linda Chalfant
Director
Amherst Leisure Services & Supplemental Education
Bangs Community Center
70 Boltwood Place
Amherst, MA 01002

Dear Linda,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to express my thoughts on the Community Development Block Grant and the incredible work Amherst LSSE does within our schools. I am grateful for the continued partnership between ARPS and LSSE and admire the consistent and thoughtful afterschool programs LSSE provides the children and families of our community. LSSE provides enriching and academically focused activities which enthrall our students while simultaneously enveloping families and community. The work of LSSE in our schools is a strong testament to dedication, commitment and collaboration.

Last year, the Primetime afterschool program was a huge success at Wildwood Elementary School. Many parents who depend on this program were thrilled with the activities, homework assistance and overall structure of the program. The staff leadership was unparalleled and the coordination and cooperation of all involved was indeed monumental. It is my hope that this program be extended throughout all elementary schools within the district.

In addition, I was impressed with the foresight of the program leaders to schedule activities throughout the school year especially on holidays and early dismissal days. These are the instances in which parents tend to panic if an afterschool program is cancelled. I am proud to say that in the case of the Primetime program at Wildwood, our students enjoyed a trip to the Boston Aquarium on Veterans' Day. Parents were thrilled that their children were supervised on a special field trip while they were at work or attending classes.

Perhaps the most crucial element is that the Community Development Block Grant will provide low to moderate income families access to affordable and reliable childcare. This is an incredibly powerful vehicle for many families within our district. Currently there are 205 families in the elementary schools who qualify for Free & Reduced Lunch. These parents must work in order to provide for their children and the knowledge that their children receive safe and supervised afterschool care is essential. It provides parents with peace of mind and provides children with a positive, memorable experience. All in all, a strong connection is forged between families and the community.

Thank you for the incredibly positive experience LSSE Primetime provides the children of our schools.

Most sincerely,

Maria Geryk
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Please submit response to the following questions:

- A. Please describe in full the project for which you are requesting funding:**
Include information on the number of individuals or families to be served and who they are, i.e. disabled, low-income, homeless, etc.

The Town of Amherst Leisure Services and Supplemental Education, LSSE welcomes this opportunity to submit a Community Development Block Grant, CDBG, for priority services including Education: Outreach and Advocacy. Our proposal, the LSSE Child Care Program, requests funding to continue the success of the current CDBG funded LSSE Childcare Programs that span the school year and that are located at the Wildwood Elementary School. Current funding has included support for the Prime Time Afterschool Program, childcare for vacation week camps and a collection of holiday and curriculum day trips to areas of educational interest.

This proposal seeks to expand the current program to provide accessible, quality after school child care for children from low to moderate income families at all three of Amherst's public elementary schools. In partnership with the Amherst School Department, the LSSE Child Care Programs will increase services to include tuition assistance for affordable afterschool programs beyond Wildwood School to include Crocker Farm and Fort River Schools. Funding this proposal will serve families in many desperate and difficult situations. Elementary school age children from families of varying sizes with low and moderate incomes that are homeless or impoverished, struggling to hold jobs, seeking employment, supporting a child with a disability, furthering their education, and more are all being currently assisted.

Families in need are routinely referred to LSSE through the school department's outreach, special education and guidance offices and through collaborative partnerships with agencies such as Hampshire County's homeless shelter, Jessie's House. Families supported by LSSE's afterschool program are connected to a wide range of protective and essential services through information and referral to local social service agencies and the Town's cadre of educational, recreational and health and community service offices. Funding this proposal will directly advance childcare availability and provide greater education and outreach to families. Funding this proposal will also link families to a large community of support systems directly held within LSSE. LSSE summer camp, sports programs and educational opportunities easy availability to other Town assistance and help families build a contact and

support base by linking with the members of LSSE's widespread community programs.

Our childcare hours of operation for the weekday afterschool programs are as follows: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 3-5:30 p.m. and Wednesdays from 1:00 to 5:30 p.m throughout the school year. Vacation camps operate for one week in the winter and spring and five school's out trips are scheduled for whole day child care during holidays and school curriculum preparation days.

This proposal would support 69 children from low and moderate income families with free or reduced fee tuition assistance for childcare. This is an expansion from the current plan which supports 28 children. This program would serve children from all over town and specifically children whose families cannot afford to pay or fully pay for childcare services.

B. What is the community's need for the proposed project/program?

Define the need or problem to be addressed by the proposed project. Explain why the project is important. Provide evidence of the severity of the need or problem. Who the affected population and why is this population presently underserved or not served?

This year there are 205 families with children in the elementary schools who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. The Amherst School enrollment projected for 2010 year indicated that Wildwood School would see school population estimates of 34.7% Free and Reduced Lunch Plan, FRLP, and similar patterns at Crocker Farm School with 35.5% FRLP and 34.8% FRLP at Fort River Elementary School. The school lunch program statistics are a strong representation of Amherst's poverty, unfortunately additional examples are abundant. A greater reliance on fuel assistance, the absence of enough affordable housing, last winter's call for a warming shelter, the advanced number of adults and families visiting the Amherst Survival Center and other factors when coupled with the local and national long term recession, all point to a community with recognizable economic problems.

Children whose families have lost a job or a home may experience a sense of isolation, depression and a loss of community. Burdens at home can be carried to school and affect academic achievement and present discipline issues. Support from a caring adult and educationally and engaging activities of the type that are

nurtured in a quality, reliable after school child care setting can ease transitions, motivate learning, strengthen a sense of belonging, provide healthy alternatives to the lure of drug and alcohol abuse, and assure a safe alternative to staying home alone. National data supports the fact that juvenile crime increases during the hours immediately after school. Statistics provided by the After-school Programs: Keeping Children Safe and Smart, a joint report from the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice shows that students in after school programs exhibit fewer behavioral problems, better able to handle conflicts and improved self-confidence.

Children from families with single parent households and children from families with dual working parent households all share a need for affordable afterschool childcare. While keeping a job becomes harder in a recession, holding it without reliable childcare either puts the child at risk or the entire family's financial support at risk if parents cannot remain at work beyond the traditional end of a school day. Affordable childcare routinely works as an economic stabilizer and poverty prevention service. When families lose a job, poverty grows leaving an even greater need and cost for advanced emergency services.

Amherst is the site of the University of Massachusetts and several community colleges are in neighboring cities and towns. The LSSE Child Care Program strives to serve parents that are students, many of them struggling to continue their education and economically support their families. The proximity of these educational institutions expands the possibility of educational and career advancement when affordable childcare is available. Amherst parents attending school and working parents share similar childcare challenges and this increases the need for affordable programs. Parents who are students have less opportunity to work and therefore their income is often negatively affected limiting their ability to pay for childcare expenses.

LSSE's current CDBG funded Child Care Programs reached maximum enrollment this year in the first month of school. Our projections show that LSSE will use all of its CDBG tuition assistance support with the 27 eligible children that were the first to enroll. A waiting list (7 names) has started and is growing with the slim hope that additional funding may become available to remove children from the waiting list. Continued requests for tuition assistance from school personnel, social service providers and inquiring parents reflect the unmet need.

C. Community Involvement

What process was used to select this particular project? How was the process responsive to expressed community need?

This project was chosen after discussions and input with the Town Manager, the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the Interim Director of ELE and Intervention, the Amherst Community Services Director, the Director of Conservation and Development, the Amherst Leisure Services and Supplemental Education Commission, the Select Board liaison to the LSSE Commission, school guidance staff, social service agency staff, parents on waiting lists and numerous parents of children currently attending LSSE's childcare programs.

Amherst's Interim Superintendent of Schools, Maria Geryk, recently shared the following thoughts and vision about current student needs and hopes for the future with child care providers and Town officials:

- *For our community to support high quality after school programming for all of our students which includes academic intervention, homework help, enrichment (art, music, theater), and affinity groups.*
- *To acquire funds to increase participation in the after school programs. The hope is to provide funds from the Community Block Grant to ensure participation of income-eligible children.*
- *To create a level of consistency across the programs, a common experience for students in after school. Parents should not base where they live on the type of after school programs offered. In addition it is important that the pay structure and staffing ratio be consistent.*

This project is responsive to the community's requested need in that approved CDBG funding would enlarge the pool of funding available for tuition assistance and meet community needs for additional, affordable childcare.

Define the process that will be used to maintain involvement of the project beneficiaries in the implementation of the project.

Project beneficiaries will be engaged in the implementation of the project at many levels. New families and currently enrolled families will learn about the availability of additional child care tuition assistance in numerous ways including: direct household

mailings, the LSSE brochure, the LSSE and Town website, through school outreach and guidance staff, through social service agency contacts, school announcements on websites and blogs and in LSSE's current programs. Families will also learn of ways to link with other LSSE programs through fliers, calendars and announcements at the program site.

Project beneficiaries will serve on after school advisory and program boards and participate in focus group discussions for increased feedback and to exchange ideas. Parent input is regularly passed from parents to childcare program directors and staff during the end of day child pick-up period. Conversations that are started in the often quick daily goodbyes get followed up with more in-depth telephone conversations between staff and parents at a later time. The childcare programs host special events that connect project beneficiaries in a relaxed atmosphere during holidays and performances and open house programs. Written program evaluations are offered to parents for feedback that they may wish to give in an anonymous manner.

D. Project Feasibility

The project impact will be evaluated upon the extent to which the response meets the following criteria:

1. Describe what evidence exists to show that the community at large or project beneficiaries will use the project. Include documentation of demand for the activity through summary descriptions of surveys, inquiries, waiting lists or past participation.

Please see the attached Appendices A and B with excerpts supporting project feasibility and goals and objective from the Amherst Master Plan. The Draft 2011 Amherst Community Development Strategy Update under the heading: *Provide community services to meet the needs of all resident*. Under the Prioritized List of Projects (19.) add, "Provide Social Services including but not limited to childcare tuition assistance and assistance for low/moderate income families to attend childcare and school-age after school programs,....." In another statement later on in section (19.) further, "The Town is most concerned with sustaining and expanding current Town funded programs as well as those agencies currently receiving Town funds for some activities."

Within this general document are other references to the need for tuition assistance for childcare and school-age afterschool programs. Specifically, the reports states, "The priority this year is to continue and expand Town funded social service activities."

A waiting list for additional funding for LSSE Child Care services exists and is growing with new inquiries from families and social service providers. This year's program was filled quickly- within the first two months of school beginning.

2. If applicable, describe and document the availability and source of matching or other funds needed to complete the project.

The LSSE department will solicit business and individual contributions from the community to help support the program and provide more low income subsidies. Fundraisers such as the LSSE Halloween program will also contribute to additional support for subsidies.

3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of all personnel involved in the project as well as internal controls.

Linda Chalfant, LSSE Director employed with the Town of Amherst for 23 years and serving as director for 20 years will supervise the Program Director; manage department budget, public relations, outreach and sustainability. Linda Chalfant holds a Masters degree in Parks and Recreation Administration.

Stacey LeCuivre, LSSE Program Director employed with the town since 1995. Stacey supervises the LSSE Child Care Program staff, plans and promotes the program, develops and monitors the program budget, handles scheduling, provides on-site leadership and manages facility issues for the program site. Stacey holds a Bachelors degree in Sociology.

Gail Weston, LSSE Operations Manager has worked for the Town since 2002 and administers the bills, payroll, financial projections and monitoring of accounts, records and the registration area.

Donna Roy, LSSE Marketing and Registration Supervisor has worked for the Town since 1999 and manages the front desk information and registration operations and numerous marketing efforts including the quarterly LSSE brochure and web site.

LSSE Child Care Leaders supervise the children in all LSSE Child Care activities and plan and lead participants in a variety of after school programs. Staff are experienced in child care programming, routinely receive additional training in child care practices and are often involved with LSSE's summer childcare programs and thereby maintain continuity of service for families. All staff are First Aid and CPR certified, and follows Commonwealth of Massachusetts child care regulations.

- 4. Citing past accomplishments, document that the agency has the necessary past expertise to conduct the activity and has successfully completed past activities in a timely manner.**

Throughout LSSE's history thousands of families and children have benefitted from the stimulating array of year round programs including summer camps, arts programming, youth and adult education classes, special events, sports activities and child care programs offered each season throughout the year. LSSE's program offerings span all age groups including infants to senior citizens but particularly focuses on school age children.

LSSE successfully administers include the summer days camps known as Adventure Playground and Early Adventures. These eight week, full day and half day summer day camps serve upwards of more than 100 children daily providing children ages 5-12 with safe and engaging child care.

Children from families of low and moderate income have also been assisted through a Town supported fee subsidy program that has provided subsidies to children representing nearly 200 families. This program continues, though reduced in size during the Town's economic downturn.

- 5. Please submit a program budget that includes all sources of revenue and all expenses.**

Please see the attached department budget and this request with an expanded LSSE Child Care Program Budget.

E. Impact

Describe the impact the activity will have on the specifically identified needs. What measurable improvements will result from the activity? How much of the need will be addressed? Define the direct and indirect outcomes that will result from the project. Identify quantitative and qualitative measures determine that the outcomes are achieved.

The impact of supporting the LSSE Child Care program can be seen in the following ways:

Direct Outcomes

- (1) An increase in access to safe, affordable child care
- (2) An increase in families means to attend work
- (3) An increase in families means to look for work
- (4) An increase in families means to further their education
- (5) An increase in awareness of Town and human service supports
- (6) Ability for students to engage in and practice activities that may have been reduced from school programs or unavailable at home.
- (7) Children will receive enriching experiences that may otherwise not be accessible to them- trips, outings, performances, etc.
- (8) Children will engage in additional exercise and health programs including outdoor exercise
- (9) Opportunities provided for issues that may show up earlier in the school day that can then be discussed and processed in an afterschool setting
- (10) A decrease in juvenile crime during the after school hours
- (11) Stronger academic performance and student interest in school work related to homework assistance, group reading and exposure to new skills

Indirect Outcomes

- (1) Improved quality of life for family
- (2) Advanced sense of community for child and family
- (3) Improved connection for students with school environment

- (4) Ability for students to excel in a non classroom, more experiential setting
- (5) Increased practice for children to learn to work cooperatively with others
- (6) Positive after school role models may help influence a child's desire to attend school.

F. Evaluation

Goals and Assessments: Please explain your short-term goals and long-term goals. Describe the changes in the target population that indicate the program's success. How will these changes be measured? Will anticipated changes affect the municipality's responsibility to this target population? How will the impact of this service on individual clients be tracked over time? Will there be additional beneficiaries? Will this service enable clients to become self sufficient? How is this service linked to other human social/service programs in the community?

Documented interviews with families, other social service providers, police department and school staff can help identify results to the above named outcomes. Surveys conducted at the beginning of the school year, midway and at the end of the school year to register parent satisfaction, concerns and sense of progress can assist with level of outcome progress.

Additional beneficiaries will include all those connected with the family. The child or children will be supported with safe enriching programs and nonschool age children and other members of the family will be beneficiaries as well. If parents can continue an education, look for work, attend work or receive respite while a child is receiving after school care the entire family will be served. If the afterschool care permits a parent to keep a job or improve their skills and education the entire financial outlook for a family will improve. This service may entitle a family to become self sufficient and to improve their financial outlook.

G. Agency Information

Please provide an overview of your organization, including length of time in existence, experience in successfully conducting activities for which funding is being sought and skills and current services that reflect capacity for success.

LSSE is a department within the Town of Amherst and provides a comprehensive mix of programs, services and facilities for recreation, educational and cultural purposes to upwards of

40,000 individual, youth and seniors per year. We are guided by an appointed LSSE Commission of local citizens and various committees and ad hoc groups to assist in supporting our work. We have credible long term affiliations and partnerships with the public schools, colleges, and University, businesses and community members. The LSSE Department has been successfully offering programs to children and families since 1982 as the Amherst Leisure Services and Supplemental Education Department and prior to that as the Amherst Recreation Department dating back to the 1950's.

The LSSE Department has operated a licensed child care program since 1995. The LSSE Department has operated child care focused summer day camp programs since the 1980's.

APPENDIX A

Supplement to *D. Project Feasibility*

Amherst Master Plan-Alignment with CDBG Proposal *Objectives and strategies that will support the services and facilities goals for the Town*

Section 8.6 (Page 90)

S.3.B Continue to use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and other available sources of revenue to help low and moderate-income families pay for childcare services. Access to affordable childcare is a necessity for many working families. The Town should continue to use Community Development Block Grant funds and other available funds to make childcare services more affordable to low and moderate-income families.

S.3.D Help support social service agencies by encouraging communication, coordination, collaboration, and accountability. Seek funding to support priority services for Amherst residents in need. Inter-agency collaboration can lead to more efficient and effective provision of social services in Amherst. When allocating funding, priority should be placed on those programs that meet the needs of low-income residents and other citizens in need.

Section 2.4 (Page 10)

Provide community services to meet the needs of all residents. Amherst is becoming an increasingly diverse community in terms of ethnicity, age, income, education, physical ability, and in many other ways. Amherst's services and facilities must keep pace with the population's changing needs, including maintaining its historically strong schools, planning for needed fire department, public works, school, library, and recreation facilities, and providing critical social support services.

Section 2.8 & 8.1 (Pages 14 & 85)

Services and Facilities: To provide excellent, cost effective, accessible facilities, services, and programs reflecting values respectful of our ages and our diversity, which, through collaboration, contribute to a high quality safe, civil, healthy, and sustainable community.

- Deliver high quality public safety services.
- Deliver high quality education from pre-school through grade 12.
- Provide high quality facilities, services, and programs that serve the needs of all the people of Amherst.

Section 8.1 (Page 85)

The Town has a strong interest in continuing to provide high-quality services including police, fire, public education, libraries, and **social services**, among others. Alternative funding sources and creative partnerships need to be pursued to ensure that these services continue to meet the high standards of community members.

Section 8.2 (Page 86)

Community services: Amherst provides a wide range of community services including health services, recreation programs, information on childcare and early education, emergency assistance to low-income families, and support services for seniors, children, and veterans. **Many of these services are housed in the Bangs Community Center.**

Section 8.5 (Page 89)

OBJECTIVE S.3 – Provide high quality facilities, services, and programs that serve the needs of all the people of Amherst. A diverse population base necessitates diversity in the services and programs provided within the community. To provide these services, the Town needs to provide adequate personnel and material

Section 8.7 (Pages 91-92)

S.3.I Support LSSE and its program of recreation and leisure activities for Amherst residents of all ages. Recreation opportunities and leisure activities contribute to the quality of life in Amherst. In accordance with the objectives and strategies addressed in Chapter 7, Open Space and Recreation, the Town should support the improvement, expansion, and maintenance of recreational facilities, athletic programs, and cultural events for residents of all ages.

The Town should:

- a. Provide activities for youth that support a physically healthy, socially-responsible lifestyle.
- b. Develop an inventory of available community facilities and public meeting space (e.g., Library community spaces, school buildings).
- c. Develop a multi-purpose community/recreational facility (see LSSE Master Plan).
- d. Explore possible uses of the old landfill for recreation or other purposes. See O.3.D.
- e. Construct public restrooms at Kiwanis Park, Plum Brook soccer fields and other public areas.

APPENDIX B

Supplement to *D. Project Feasibility*

Ideas for the Future

Community Quotes from “Planning Amherst Together”: Idea Gathering

List #	Date	Comment
2889	10/18/2006	Low cost childcare that is subsidized
2959	10/18/2006	Satellite early childhood programs throughout town pre K-2nd grade
3621	10/12/2006	Pay attention to women and children -more protection needed. Attention is needed to protect them from the impact of poverty
3609	10/12/2006	Promote increased participation (outreach by town) of international students, immigrants, and migrants
2988	10/18/2006	Expand after school programs to keep children active and engages and improve and make widely available early child care facilities
3673	10/12/2006	Small schools that provide many options for children and teens other than traditional classes with an emphasis on community service
3362	10/14/2006	Support families with young children - a clearinghouse of services for those families
3370	10/14/2006	A haven for foster children and parents, social services provided
3368	10/14/2006	Public schools share resources with homeschoolers
3014	10/18/2006	After school program/children's center
3044	10/18/2006	More services for families with young children
3025	10/18/2006	Day care available for all who need this (young kids program)
3209	10/18/2006	A place to do stuff after school
2857	10/18/2006	More after school activities on all levels
3774	10/20/2006	Eliminate fees for school activities, during and after school

**Amherst Leisure Services and Supplemental Education
Child Care Programs - FY 12 Budget
Community Development Block Grant Funds**

LSSE Child Care Programs - FY 12		AMOUNT	COMMENTS
EXPENSES			
Personnel			
LSSE Director		\$6,815	Responsibilities: program director supervision, outreach, grant management, budget
Program Director (39%)		\$24,064	Program supervision, staff training, program curriculum, parent involvement, facility inspections
Operations Manager		\$5,782	Bills, payroll, records, budget analysis, projections
Registration & Marketing Supervisor (4%)		\$2,197	Registration of participants, promotion, information technology
Program Leadership (15 staff)		\$98,483	Program delivery to children
Subtotal		\$137,341	
Fringe Benefits (FT)		\$18,636	
Total Personnel & Fringe Benefits		\$155,978	
Other Expenses			
Staff Training - CPR & Aid		\$900	Mandated medical training for on site staff
Telephone		\$900	Emergency contact telephone
Food		\$21,000	Daily snacks for children
Supplies		\$8,490	Program supplies, art materials, books, games, sports equipment
Field Trips		\$18,900	Entrance fees for local field trips, outings, visiting artists, transportation
License		\$1,105	State license from Early Education and Childcare
Staff Development		\$1,200	Professional development for staff
Total Expenses		\$52,495	
Total Personnel & Expenses		\$208,473	
10/29/2010			

Amherst Leisure Services and Supplemental Education
Child Care Programs - FY 12 Budget
Community Development Block Grant Funds

LSSE Child Care Programs - FY 12		AMOUNT
REVENUE		
Voucher Revenue		
10 children (FTE) X \$280/mo X 9.5 months		\$26,600
Full Pay Revenue		
14 children X \$96/mo X 9.5 months		\$12,768
20 children X \$280/mo X 9.5 months		\$53,200
30 children X \$57/mo X 9.5 months		\$16,245
20 children X \$114/mo X 9.5 months		\$21,660
Total Full Pay Revenue		\$103,873
Block Grant Revenue		
28 Children @ 100%:		
2 days p/wk: \$114/mo X 100% X 16 children X 9.5 months		\$17,284
Full Wk: \$280/mo X 100% X 12 children X 9.5 months		\$31,920
24 Children at 60%:		
2 days p/wk: \$114/mo X 60% X 4 children X 9.5 months		\$2,599
3 days p/wk: \$171/mo X 60% X 14 children X 9.5 months		\$13,646
Full Wk: \$280/mo X 60% X 6 children X 9.5 months		\$9,576
17 Children @ 25%:		
3 days p/wk: \$171/mo X 25% X 9 children X 9.5 months		\$3,655
Full Wk: \$280/mo X 25% X 8 children x 9.5 months		\$5,320
Total Block Grant Revenue		\$84,000
Less Supplanting Requirement		-\$6,000
CDBG Request		\$78,000
Grand Total LSSE Child Care Revenue		\$208,473
10/29/2010		